

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for holding in position adjacent facing ends of tube sections aligned along an axis, comprising:
 - 5 - an elongated element insertable between the adjacent facing ends;
 - first and second jaw devices movable with respect to each other along the elongated element and each having a contact portion for contacting the tube portions, at least one of the jaw devices being removable from the elongated element; and
 - 10 - clamping means for clamping the tube sections with the jaw devices to hold in position the facing ends.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first jaw device comprises
 - a frame;
 - 15 - first and second members, each having a first end pivotally connected to the frame and a second end opposite the first end, said second end respectively having edges pivotable between a first position where a passage is defined between said edges for introducing therein the elongated element, and a second position where said passage is reduced
 - 20 for restraining the elongated element;
 - means for urging the members in the second position; and
 - means for manually urging the members in the first position.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the means for urging the members comprise first and second resilient elements respectively biasing said first and second members in the second position by taking a point of support in the frame.
4. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the means for manually urging comprise
 - 30 two urging devices each including:
 - a lever arm mounted on the first end of the member;
 - a rod having a first end provided with a handle, and a second end for

contact against the lever arm; and

- a guide integrated in the frame for guiding the rod from a location where the handle is accessible to the lever arm.

5 5. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the second end of the first member has a serrated surface and wherein the second end of the second member has a surface with a longitudinal ridge.

10 6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the clamping means comprises:
- a shaft having a first end solid with the elongated element, and a second end opposite to the first end, the second end comprising a threaded end section extending through the second jaw device; and
- a threaded element for threadably engaging with the threaded end section, said threaded element having a stop portion for contact against the second
15 jaw device to, in operation, move the jaw devices towards each other and clamp therebetween the tube sections.

20 7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the threaded element is a knob provided with a threaded bore for threadedly receive the threaded end section.

25 8. A method for holding in position adjacent facing ends of tube sections aligned along an axis, said method comprising the steps of:
a) inserting an elongated element between the adjacent facing ends;
b) placing first and second jaw devices on both sides of the tube sections for cooperatively engaging the jaw devices on opposite end portions of the elongated element; and
c) clamping the tube sections with the jaw devices to hold in position the facing ends.

30 9. The method of claim 8, wherein step a) is performed before step b).